



An Ex-Premier of France to Trial on Charge of Treason

Joseph Caillaux, Bitter Foe of Clemenceau, Accused of Aiding the Germans

By Fred B. Pitney

WITHIN a few days, almost exactly two years after his arrest, Joseph Caillaux, ex-Premier of France, is to be tried before the High Court of the French Senate for treason, euphemistically paraphrased by French courtesy as "plotting against the external security of the state."

It is the last stage of the ten years' battle between Clemenceau and Caillaux. What is the reason for that long and bitter fight, the implacable duel between the two ablest men in France? Why is it that Clemenceau paces steadily toward the end, full of years and honors, while Caillaux at fifty-six is threatened with being placed against a wall, waiting for the handkerchief to be bound over his eyes?

In few words, it is the difference between indomitable patriotism and unbridled ambition.

To understand Joseph Caillaux and why the High Court of the French Senate is confronted with the solemn duty of trying for his life an ex-Premier of France it is necessary to trace his career from the beginning. One sees then that the prime motive of his life led inevitably to this ultimate end.

The cause of the action that led to the treason charge against Caillaux was not an unfortunate mistake. He was not misled by false friends. It was not the misconception of a high ideal. It was not even the fatal error of a man blinded by success to the true balance of values. No. Treason with Joseph Caillaux, if he be found guilty as charged, was simply and merely the end to which every fact and act of his life led undeviatingly, just as Clemenceau's honors are the end to which every fact of his life led.

Clemenceau has been fired by patriotism burning with a high and pure flame. Ambition has motivated Caillaux, ambition for power and ambition for money. Ambition is an enriching quality if it is balanced by high principles. But Caillaux has been devoid of principle. There has been no counter weight to his ambition. It has been utterly unscrupulous and given a man of his ability, his strength and mastery over men, it has moved him with mathematical precision to a certain and unavoidable end.

Joseph Caillaux was born March 30, 1863, at Le Mans, of an old French bourgeois family. One of his grandfathers was a member of the French National Assembly after the Revolution, while another held an important position under Napoleon I. Caillaux's father, Alexandre Caillaux, was a civil engineer and with the Belgian, de Gammond, first proposed building a tunnel under the Channel from Dover to Calais. He was for many years chief engineer for the Chemin-de-fer de l'Ouest, but in 1871 went into politics and was Minister of Public Works in that year and Minister of Finance in the Duc de Broglie's Cabinet in 1876.

Joseph studied law and was admitted to the bar, but chose finance and politics as a career. He inherited a modest fortune from his father and set out to raise it to immense proportions. Starting with a minor administrative position in the Ministry of Finance in 1888, he succeeded in attracting the attention of Waldeck-Rousseau and was successively raised to higher positions until in 1898 he abandoned administrative work and stood for election to the Chamber of Deputies.

The Duc de la Rochefoucauld, a Royalist, was Caillaux's opponent. Caillaux, running as a Republican, was elected by a handsome majority and thereafter continued to represent the Department of the Sarthe

in the Chamber until his arrest. Once in the Chamber his future was assured, for he had the backing of Waldeck-Rousseau, who made him Minister of Finance in 1899, a position he held until 1902.

Up to this time Caillaux had been a comparatively obscure man, but he had been, as he always remained, a tireless worker. By attaching himself to Waldeck-Rousseau he had laid the sure foundation of political success, and by his operations on the Bourse had greatly increased his fortunes. His purse was ready for a political career when at the age of thirty-five he first entered the

under Waldeck-Rousseau, he had proposed an income tax law. It made him popular with the radicals and badly frightened the financiers of the Bourse. Caillaux secretly killed his own bill, retained his popularity with both the radicals and the capitalists, and cynically wrote to his mistress, claiming credit for his finesse.

He was openly accused of offering to have allowed a claim against the French government of 40,000,000 francs, provided the lion's share was turned over to him. He was accused of trying to hold up a great Paris bank for 400,000 francs; he was mobbed by the stockholders of the Credit Foncier of Argentina for appropriating to himself such a large share of the profits of the concern, while their returns were so meager, and he was charged with protecting and aiding in the escape of Henri Rochette, who swindled the French people out of \$30,000,000.

Meanwhile, his private life was

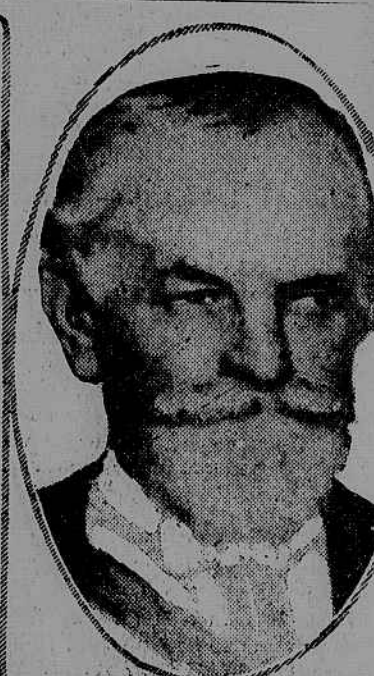


Joseph Caillaux.

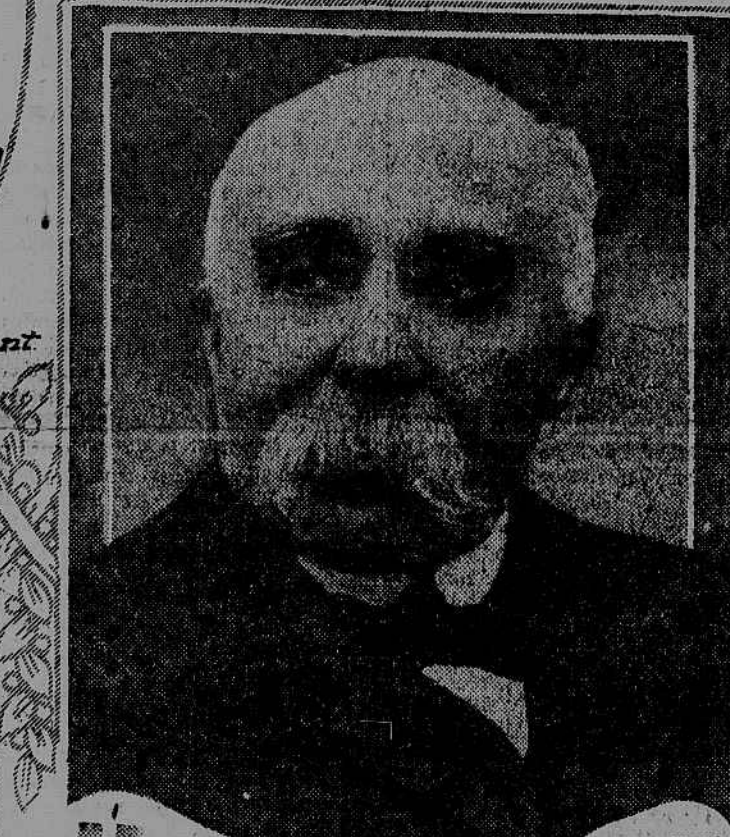
Mme. Caillaux.



Lieut. Morner.



A. Dubost, President of Senate.



Baron von Schoen, Georges Clemenceau, Louis J. Mahy.

Some of those whose names will figure in the Caillaux trial

ence of Caillaux the money was found and the fine paid. Nevertheless, Turkey had received the 500,000,000 francs, which were afterward used against the Entente in 1914.

Caillaux was again out of office until the end of 1913, when Gaston Doumergue was called on to form a government. Caillaux was the leader of the opposition in the Chamber, and Doumergue was only named as Premier as a cover for Caillaux on account of the scandals with which he had recently been connected. Caillaux became Finance Minister for the fourth time, and under his leadership the government advocated reducing the time of military service from three years to two years, just at the moment when Germany had added several hundred thousand men to her standing army.

Gaston Calmette, editor of the "Figaro," at once began a furious campaign against Caillaux in the columns of his paper. The attack



Gaston Calmette.

Much Personal and Official Scandal Will Be Aired Before a Verdict Is Given

ed the policies and controlled the destinies of the country whose lot it was to protect the liberties of the world.

Yielding to the first impulse, he went into the army and was made paymaster. But there was no career in the army for him, no chance for rehabilitation and a return to power. There was even another breath of scandal, some hint of irregularities in the army finances, and when he and Mme. Caillaux appeared together on the streets of Paris they were hooted and pelted. Decidedly, the army held nothing for Caillaux. Politics was his rôle. To

intervention of Count James Miotto and Count Luxburg, presented his views on the war to the German government. His dealings with Lipscher, the German spy paymaster, and reception of an emissary from Lipscher in Paris, are detailed. Then come his dealings with the notorious Marx of Mannheim and Marx's agent. All these things are confirmed by documents found in Caillaux's safe deposit box in Florence.

Germans Claimed Him

He is tangled in the web of Bolo Pacha—or was it Bolo who was caught in the Caillaux net?—and is smeared with the slime of the despicable "Bonnet Rouge" gang. "It is impossible," says the indictment, "not to be struck by the fact that all the affairs of enemy intelligence at present known have as their pivot M. Caillaux's personality in the choice of intermediaries or of journals as recipients of German liberality."

Delegates from Alsace-Lorraine to the Reichstag have testified that at a secret meeting of the Budget Committee in May, 1916, either Bethmann-Hollweg or Jagow declared that there would be a change of government in France before the autumn, that Caillaux would return to power, and then there would be peace.

"Caillaux is our man," said the speaker.

The indictment now discusses the Italian journey, prefacing it with a review of the general situation of the belligerents at the end of 1916, when Rumania, having abandoned Bucharest, was gathering the remnants of her armies in Moldavia, when Constantine was having partisans of Venizelos murdered in the streets of Athens and attacking French sailors treacherously, when the Briand Cabinet was violently attacked and there was a Ministerial crisis in England, when for the first time in the Italian Chamber the Socialists dared to bring forward a motion for peace, and when, in spite of the victories of the Somme and the German failure at Verdun, the situation of the Entente was grave. That was the moment when Bethmann-Hollweg chose for pretended offers of peace and the moment chosen by Caillaux to go to Italy to begin intrigues designed to hurry Italy and France into a peace of compromise.

This brings the indictment to the great defeatist campaign of 1917.

"The German rulers," the document says, "considered Caillaux the only man in France with whom Germany could, when the moment had arrived, negotiate on advantageous bases in the event that the complete victory by arms, which she still counted on, should escape her. Thus alone can one understand why the Germans were ready to supply millions to profusely distributed journals, animated or ostensibly animated by lively patriotic sentiments, or to defeatist journals, whose campaigns tended to shake the morale of the army and the nation, but which were all devoted to M. Caillaux's person."

Foiled by Clemenceau

It was Clemenceau who tripped the master plotter and wrecked his "Caesarian enterprise." As head of the Army Commission of the Senate he was familiar with all the information in the hands of the government concerning the doings of Caillaux. He began July 22, 1917, with an attack in the Senate on Louis J. Mahy, Minister of the Interior and Caillaux's creature in the Cabinet, and continued his attacks until Mahy's parliamentary immunity was withdrawn and he was brought to trial.

The charges against Mahy were rapidly followed by others—Bolo Pacha, the "Bonnet Rouge" gang and Humbert. Clemenceau exposed the weakness of the government in leaving the traitors at liberty because of the influence of the man behind them. He promised to follow the trail mercilessly, until all those who would betray France had met the fate they deserved. In November the Ribot government fell and Clemenceau was called upon to form a cabinet. He pressed the inquiry against the traitors, the evidence against Caillaux piled up, and January 13, 1918, Joseph Caillaux, ex-Premier of France, was lodged in the Prison de Santé under the charge of treason.

An Enemy's Attack

One of the scandals of his career has always been his close connection with the Bourse while he was an active politician, the steady augmentation of his private fortune by uniformly successful operations on the Bourse while he was Minister of Finance. It was this open scandal that caused Gaston Calmette to write of him in the "Figaro":

"The series of articles we have been devoting to the secret maneuvers and schemes of M. Caillaux has allowed us to show that the efforts of the Minister of Finance have constantly been directed to one single object, 'the quest of money.' We have shown the demagogic plutocrat (according to the stinging appellation applied to him by M. Briand) on the watch for all the public or private operations which could feed the war treasury on which rests all his fame. We have told of the manipulation on the Bourse which allowed his well-informed friends to increase without any risk the mysterious resources which they intend to use for the defense of his disastrous policy, or which they recognize as indispensable for his costly praise."

"We have shown that in the most unexpected administrative deliberations he was the suave and servile captive of the wealthiest foreign financiers; that, like a zealous slave, he sacrificed to them his closest colleagues in cases of disputes; that he insured for himself the continuance of lucrative honorariums and fat salaries, while retaining during his passage to power, in spite of his denials, offices well paid from Cairo and elsewhere. We have proved that in keeping—illegally—on the list of the Paris market the lottery bonds of the Credit Foncier Egyptian, in causing the laws of France to bow before a prohibited foreign security in which he was personally interested, this enemy of the savings of the nations and enemy of the safety of the country was also the enemy of justice."

"It remains for us now to show that, unknown to a parliament which he makes game of by lavishly offering it his injurious subterfuges, M. Caillaux has placed all the power of his ministerial functions at the disposal of a swindler."

The marvel is how the man survived his notoriety and seemed to thrive on his blown upon fame. A dozen years before Calmette wrote Caillaux had already made himself notorious. As Minister of Finance

as notorious as his public career. Caillaux married first in 1900, but almost immediately after his marriage fell in love with Mme. Jules Dupré. She was an unusually beautiful woman, who was the wife of a clerk in the Ministry of Fine Arts, at a salary of \$480 a year. It was to her that Caillaux confided in the letters he could not help writing to the women he loved the story of the income tax bill with which he had bamboozled both his radical followers and the capitalists. Mme. Dupré and Caillaux both obtained divorces in 1906 and Caillaux married Mme. Dupré. Her former husband was appointed an excise officer, at a salary of \$4,200 a year, and Caillaux fell in love with Mme. Leo Claretie.

This was a more difficult affair to arrange. Claretie divorced his wife in 1910, but Caillaux could not persuade Mme. Claretie to divorce him, and it was not until 1912 that he was free. Early in that year he divorced his second wife and married Mme. Claretie. But his habit of writing letters to his mistresses was destined to lead him to the brink of ruin.

Caillaux became Minister of Finance in Clemenceau's Cabinet in 1906 and remained in the government until 1909. But he wanted to be Premier. There was an election in 1910, and Caillaux left the Republicans and put himself at the head of the poor but honest Radical Socialists. He became their leader by the simple means of financing their campaign. That was where Clemenceau and Caillaux split.

Clemenceau would not prostitute his principles to obtain office. Caillaux had no principles—power was what he wanted. Clemenceau turned his back on Caillaux, who returned to the chamber at the head

of the largest single bloc there was in the body. Money had bought the balance of power. Still, President Fallières would not make him Premier, and it was not until 1911 that Caillaux went back into office as Minister of Finance once more, under Antoine Monis, and accident gave him the opportunity to betray his chief and achieve the coveted place.

Soon after this ministry was constructed the accident took place on the aviation field at Vincennes that cost the life of the Minister of War, Berteaux, and resulted in injuries to Premier Monis that confined him to his bed for several weeks. They were not sufficient, however, to prevent his transacting business and he presided at several Cabinet meetings held at his bedside.

The Double Cross

Caillaux suggested that the meetings were historic and that a photograph should be made of one of them as a souvenir. After the picture was taken he caused it to be published in the illustrated newspapers of Paris and then started an agitation in the opposition press against the idea of the destinies of France being guided by a statesman who was bedridden. When this propaganda was well under way Caillaux complained to Fallières that the administration was not only handicapped but endangered by these attacks, and said it would be well for him, Caillaux, to assume the duties of Premier temporarily, until Monis should be recovered.

After much pressing Fallières consented to do whatever Monis wanted in the matter and with this agreement Caillaux rushed off to Monis and informed him that the President insisted on his giving up the Premiership. Monis according-

ly wrote a letter of resignation and Caillaux rushed back to the Elysée Palace with it and received his own appointment as Premier before any of his colleagues had been informed of what was taking place.

The Agadir affair was already brewing when Caillaux took the helm. He had been taught by his mother that his ancestors had helped to reconquer France from the English kings, and his predilections had always been strongly anti-British, while he had had intimate financial relations with Germany. Thus, while the French Foreign Minister, Jean Cruppi, and his successor, M. de Selves, helped by Sir Edward Grey, British Minister of Foreign Affairs, were carrying on official negotiations through the French Ambassador at Berlin, Jules Cambon, apparently under the sanction of Caillaux, the latter was secretly negotiating directly with the Wilhelmstrasse through the German Ambassador at Paris, Baron von Schoen.

The end of the negotiations was a surrender of French territory in the Congo to Germany, the humiliation of France and the offending of England and Spain, both of whom had supported France against Germany. But huge profits were made on the Bourse.

This matter was no sooner finished than he helped Turkey negotiate a loan in France of 500,000 francs. In some secretive way the money was advanced, but Caillaux had already doomed his government by the Agadir negotiations. As a result of an investigation by the Senate he was forced to resign the Premiership, and the succeeding government of Louis Barthou declared the Turkish loan illegal and ordered the bank through which it had been issued to pay a fine of 8,000,000 francs. The bank never had that much money, but through the influ-

opened early in January, 1914, and day by day the secret history of Caillaux was laid before the public. On March 13 Calmette published a letter written by Caillaux to Mme. Dupré in the early days of their intimacy. It was signed "Ton Jo" and furnished the proof in his own handwriting of his duplicity in the matter of the income tax.

Caillaux Letters Printed

Calmette accompanied this letter with a threat to publish more secret documents; and Mme. Caillaux, interpreting the threat to mean that some of Caillaux's correspondence with her had in some way fallen into Calmette's hands and would be published, went to the office of the "Figaro," March 16, and killed Calmette.

Caillaux at once resigned as Minister of Finance and devoted himself to the defense of his wife. In the course of the trial, which began in July and lasted three weeks, Caillaux challenged the prosecution to produce the documents Calmette had threatened to publish, and then it developed that they were not correspondence with Mme. Caillaux at the time she was Mme. Claretie, but documents in the German official cipher, signed by Baron von Schoen, proving the secret negotiations of Caillaux with Germany at the time of the Agadir crisis. As soon as Caillaux learned the true nature of the documents he withdrew his challenge for their production.

The trial ended with the acquittal of Mme. Caillaux on the theory of a crime of passion. Then the war began.

Such was the preparation of Joseph Caillaux for the Great War, which found him in deep disgrace, cast out of the position of power as coadjutor to Doumergue and real Premier of France, where he could have direct-

await the defeat of his country by Germany and then appear as the savior, the only man who could salvage anything from the wreck. There were both money and power in that part.

It came to that openly in 1916, when Germany was hammering at Verdun. Caillaux's followers and sycophants exulted brazenly.

"France cannot hold out ten days," they said. "The Germans will take Verdun and then it will be all over. They will have to call on Caillaux then. They will have to call on him to save France. He is the only man who can do it."

It was devilish to see the exultation of that brood of traitors and defeatists. France was in her darkest hour and they made no effort to hide their joy.

Caillaux, however, had not stood silently, waiting for fortune. He had given fortune a vastly helping hand. The indictment reveals him. It says:

A "Peace of Defeat"

"Political notes discovered in the Florence safe throw a flood of light on M. Caillaux's true intention. They prove he had conceived a plan of seizing power in order to make peace and had taken every measure to secure this result. These documents cannot form the basis of a charge, but justice has the right and it is its duty to take account of them."

"The 'Rubicon' law to be imposed on Parliament, if it does not consent to vote it, reveals M. Caillaux's ambitious designs. The very conditions under which his government will have to force peace upon the country are carefully defined. The 'responsible' memorandum proves that M. Caillaux was expecting that he would have to conclude a 'peace of defeat' intended, in order to better assure the success of his Caesarian enterprise, to throw a large part of the responsibility for the war not upon the aggressors, but upon those Frenchmen who had the frightful responsibility of assuring the country's defense in the most tragic period of its history, thus exposing them to the terrible and often unjust wrath of a vanquished people. M. Viviani is right when, in his deposition, he terms it an abominable work."

One sees him, Caillaux, the man with an infinite capacity for labor, directed always to the ends of his unscrupulous ambition.

The indictment picks him up at the time he left the army, a few weeks after the war began, and follows him through all the peregrinations of his plottings. He first went to South America on a minor and obscure mission for the government, and there, through the